



# Long Island-India Venture Summit

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Our motto for the day is: If you can't beat 'em, work up an alliance.

That is the conclusion Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) reached after taking congressional colleagues on a tour of the Computer Associates facility in Hyderabad, India, and meeting with officials from India's government and business leaders about the issue of outsourcing.

"I wanted them to get the perspective of an American company that has thousands of employees and what their experience was in India," Israel said of why he took his colleagues to CA. "It was just eye-opening."

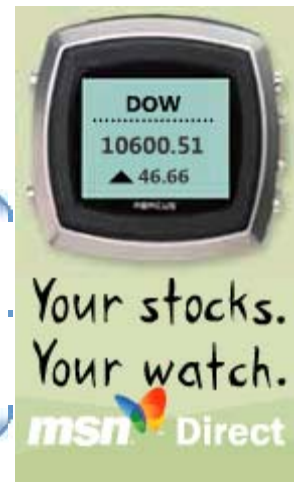
The most telling statistic: A software programmer in Hyderabad earns \$15,000 a year, while someone doing the same job in Islandia gets \$70,000.

Then the group toured a facility called Cyber Towers, a complex near CA that houses branches of other major U.S. technology companies. Rent in the state-of-the-art complex is 80 cents a square foot. That compares to about \$20 a foot on Long Island. "When we bemoan the loss of jobs, we've also got to understand what the labor force and the marketplace is like, and enter that into the equation," he said.

So after returning early last week, and having heard both sides of the argument - i.e., let the free market work or pass protective legislation - a middle ground started to crystallize in Israel's head. "I think that there is a third strategy that would uniquely benefit Long Island, and that is harnessing each nation's capabilities in national security by expanding defense co-production opportunities," he said. "We are just missing the boat when it comes to defense joint production - we don't do it."

Israel thinks the timing is right, as India becomes a hotbed of research in information technology and Long Island defense companies work on weapons systems that depend on information technology and biotech.

So Israel is planning what he is calling a Long Island-India defense and export summit, at which India's ambassador and some military attachés would meet with Long Island defense companies to discuss possible joint ventures and what work he might have to do governmentally to deal with legal barriers.



"India is developing a cadre of inexpensive intellectual talent. Long Island has a proven heritage of engineering and manufacturing new generations of defense technologies. What I want to do is marry the two," Israel said. "We ought to be developing jobs in both countries."

### Celebrity in the Dark

Jim Finkle has learned his lesson, and the next time a new candidate for a place on what he calls his "I Love Me" wall walks into his office at the Long Island High Technology Incubator in Stony Brook, he'll be ready with a camera that at least has a working flash.

Finkle realized he needed one last week after designer Diane vonFurstenberg popped in an hour early for her appointment with one of Finkle's tenant companies, Lab21. According to Lab21 president Nathaniel Benson, vonFurstenberg is a devoted user of his company's individualized face cream based on a customer's DNA. "She was interested in coming out and taking a look at how the product was made," Benson said, as well as picking up the first jar ever made in the large- (but not economy-) size (\$750 for six ounces).

"She walks in behind me and says, hello," Finkle said, "and then I have a bunch of pictures on the wall, and so we just started talking about these pictures of famous people. So I said, 'Jeez, I'd like to have my picture with you,' and she said, 'Only if I go next to Hillary,'" a reference to Sen. Clinton (D-N.Y.).

They took three with an inexpensive digital camera Finkle had handy. "They're all crappy," Finkle said. "It was dark in the room and the flash didn't go off."

Bad though it may be, Finkle nevertheless put a picture on his wall - next to Clinton's - and sent us copies, which we can't show you because they look more like FBI surveillance photos than friendly poses.

Benson, meanwhile, doesn't know if Lab21 - which is getting set to have a certificate for its cream included in the goodie bag given presenters at the Academy Awards - will get more than a repeat customer out of vonFurstenberg's visit. But he noted, "We are a company are always looking for celebrity endorsements."

Just don't ask Finkle to take the picture.

### Matzo Monster

Sometimes even the best of ideas can get out of hand, and when that happens corrective action is required.

We're talking, of course, about what has happened in the seven years since Ronnie Dragoon - in an effort to mark his 25th anniversary in business, drum up a little traffic during a traditionally slow period and raise a few bucks for the Interfaith Nutrition Network - ran a matzo ball eating contest at his Ben's Kosher Delicatessens.

The first year was fine, but then, he said, "all of a sudden, it became professional eaters coming in." Ben's matzo ball contest became an official stop on the International Federation of Competitive Eating tour, along with the onion eating contest in Maui next month, August's cabbage contest in Alaska and the July hot dog eating contest on Coney Island.

"We never had any intentions when we started this that it would become almost national in scope," Dragoon said. Problem is: In addition to the nationwide publicity, which is nice, Dragoon also likes the regulars on the tour, including Eric Booker of Copiague, a subway conductor who won last year's event. "They're really a good group of guys," Dragoon said.

"We mulled it over, and said, let's bring back the spirit of the neighborhood," Dragoon said. This year, Dragoon added "amateur" categories, for grandmothers, grandfathers, college students, women (most of the winners on the tour are men) and public school teachers. The eat-offs are under way; the finals are scheduled for Jan. 27.

#### THE TICKER:

ARE TWO talking heads better than one? Matt Crosson thinks so, which is why, after a lukewarm board reception to having either Democrat strategist James Carville or former Republican House speaker Newt Gingrich address the Long Island Association's annual luncheon meeting, LIA president Crosson came back with the proposal to hire them both. So the Feb. 27 event will have a point-counterpoint tone, as well as possible spontaneity. Crosson said that to his knowledge, Carville and Gingrich have shared a podium only once before. "They're very entertaining," Crosson said, "politically informative - and they know how to be succinct." More to the point, will they sell tickets? Crosson said the response for sponsorships has been "really great so far."

FORGET ABOUT Discover, Money, CNN and CBS. A West Hempstead-based company has really made it, now that it has become a question on the game show "Hollywood Squares." The question was, "A company named Changing World Technologies has developed a process to change garbage into what?" With "gas," comedian Martin Mull came close enough to the correct answer - oil - to make "agree" the correct contestant response. Commented chief executive Brian Appel in an e-mail: "We know we've arrived."

FROM ARRIVALS to departures, or the Hauppauge Industrial Association's Long Goodbye (Part III): Last week's roast of former executive director Marcy Tublisky proved you can only stretch the same material so far. Former HIA president Arthur Sanders was funnier honoring Tublisky at the HIA gala in November, and the speeches were shorter at the December luncheon. Last week's had more sugar than the dessert.

FINALLY, if you want to know how great the rift is between Computer Associates chairman emeritus Charles Wang and successor Sanjay Kumar, consider this: We hear that before making one of his rare appearances at the Nassau Coliseum to watch the hockey team he owns with Wang, Kumar calls Islanders officials to make sure Wang isn't showing up. We guess that's to make sure the fights stay on the ice, where they belong.

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